

October 29, 1962

Notes for Presidential Speech

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Pictures  
retrieved from  
White House  
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1. It appears that we have weathered one of the great crises of the post-war.
2. Mr. Khrushchev has promised that the offensive weapons will now be removed from Cuba; and that their removal will be verified by international inspection. (Today our own aircraft have verified that construction has been halted at the missile sites and that the assembly of the bombing aircraft has ceased. I DOUBT THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD SPEAK TO THE NATION UNTIL AT LEAST THIS DEGREE OF VERIFICATION HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED.)
3. I have repeated our assurance, often given, that we would not invade Cuba if its government did not engage in direct or indirect aggression and honored its international agreements.
4. Within the framework of our hemispheric commitments, the other members of the OAS have joined in this assurance.
5. We have faced this crisis as a unified people, confident that its full strength was mobilized behind what was morally and legally right. We have demonstrated in this time, as we have often in our history, that when our power is harnessed to principle we are capable of controlling our destiny.
6. Our alliances have never stood firmer in the shadow of the nuclear threat. It is now clear that free men behave collectively as they would individually in the face of mortal danger.
7. In facing this crisis, not only did our Allies discharge their responsibilities to us but we discharged our responsibilities to them: we refused to burden their interests to lighten the burden on ourselves.
8. In the family of the OAS, there is now a new perception of common interests, a new basis of confidence. On this we must build; above all, we must move forward together to give increased life and substance and momentum to the Alliance for Progress.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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9. In the Atlantic Community we must not only continue to stand together on the question of Berlin, but move forward rapidly with the partnership which our circumstances create and possibilities permit -- a partnership not merely in military affairs but in the conducting of our policies both political and economic. ...

10. While the lifting of this crisis is good for us all, great tasks remain in every quarter of the globe: to maintain our position in Berlin; to assure that the agreement in Laos does not degenerate again into dangerous conflict; to liquidate the war in Viet-Nam mounted by the Communists to the north; to complete the creation of an independent and unified Congo.

11. During this week the peace of the world has been endangered not merely by the events in and around Cuba but by the Chinese Communist aggression across the command line on the northern frontiers of India. We have agreed, at the request of the Government of India, to explore the possibilities of assisting this -- the largest of the democracies -- whose great creative labors in development are now threatened by this vicious intrusion.

12. There is one transcendent lesson of this crisis. It arises in part from an effort radically to shift the nuclear balance between the Soviet Union and the United States by installing medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles within our early warning system. Our military plans are designed to insure against any further threats to the nuclear balance, and we will carry forward those plans; but it is time for us all to make a supreme effort to seek our own security and the common security of mankind by other means -- by measures of effectively inspected arms control. In our correspondence, Chairman Khrushchev and I have both spoken of the need to lift the threat of war from mankind and to release our material, scientific and technical resources for other more creative tasks.

13. While fully maintaining our strength, I am conscious that the ultimate lesson of this crisis is that those who bear responsibility for their actions must now, as never before, move towards a true peace.

W. W. R.

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